

## CHAPTER 2

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

The relationship between socioeconomic status and health is well established, with people at the lowest socioeconomic levels experiencing the highest rates of illness and death (Lynch & Kaplin in Berkman and Kawachi (eds) 2000). As socioeconomic position improves, health status also improves. This gradient from poorest to wealthiest has been observed for most of the major causes of death (Turrell et al. 1999).

This Chapter provides information on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, using experimental estimates of the resident Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations as well as Census counts. Estimated resident population (ERP) adjusts the count from Census night, 7 August 2001, to 30 June 2001, making allowance for net Census undercount, Australian residents temporarily overseas on Census night, and for instances in which Indigenous status was not reported in the Census.

This data provides a context for the health and welfare information in later Chapters.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Census counts The number of people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2001 Census was 410,000. This represented an increase of 16% since the 1996 Census, and followed increases of 17% between 1986 and 1991, and 33% between 1991 and 1996. The count of non-Indigenous persons increased by 4% between the 1996 and 2001 Censuses.

Three-quarters of the intercensal increase over the five years to 2001 (12% out of 16%) can be explained by demographic factors (births and deaths), with the remaining increase attributable to other factors such as improvements in Census collection methods and an increased propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait origin. In the intercensal period from 1991 to 1996, less than half (14% out of 33%) of the Indigenous population growth could be explained by demographic factors.

The largest increases in the Indigenous population at the state and territory level were recorded for the Australian Capital Territory (25%), New South Wales and Queensland (each 18%) (ABS 2002g).

Experimental Indigenous estimated resident population At 30 June 2001, the final rebased experimental estimates of the resident Indigenous population of Australia was 458,500, or 2.4% of the total population. Persons identifying as of 'Aboriginal origin' comprised about 90% of the estimated resident Indigenous population; persons of 'Torres Strait Islander origin' comprised 6%, and those with dual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin comprised 4%.

## 2.1 POPULATION CONCEPTS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes two types of data on the population of Australia; counts from the Census of Population and Housing, and estimates and projections of the population. Counts are only available every five years from the Population Census, but estimates and projections are generally available for each year:

### Census counts

There are two main types of Census counts. The Census can provide counts of people where they are on Census night (place of enumeration) as well as where they usually live (usual residence). Both counts can be used for analysis although the usual residence count is preferred in geographical analyses because it classifies people who are away from home at Census time to the area in which they usually live, as long as usual residential address details are provided. Counts on a usual residence basis therefore correct for the effect of seasonal fluctuations in holiday/resort areas and, in remote areas, for the effect of visitation and mobility issues and events such as festivals or funerals.

Appendix 1 — Using Indigenous Census data, provides information on the appropriate use of Census data.

### Experimental estimates of the resident Indigenous population

To arrive at an estimate of the size and composition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population using the Census count (on a usual residence basis), allowance is made for net undercount, and for instances in which Indigenous status is unknown. While each Census aims to count every person in Australia once, some people are inevitably missed and some are counted more than once; the net effect is referred to as undercount. In addition, Indigenous status is unknown in some cases, due to the Indigenous origin question not being answered. A proportion of records in both categories will represent Indigenous Australians. Furthermore, population estimates for periods other than the Census date must also take account of births, deaths and migration in the intervening period (ABS 2002g).

Records where Indigenous status is unknown result from question non-response. During the 2001 Census there were 767,757 records for whom Indigenous status was unknown, which is equivalent to 4.1% of the total Australian population. This was an increase from the 1996 Census, where Indigenous status 'unknown' represented 3.0% of the total population (ABS 2002g). The question on Indigenous status was unanswered for only about 2.0% of people in 2001 (up from 1.7% in the 1996 Census). Most of the increase in the number of records for which Indigenous status was not recorded related to imputed records. In compiling Indigenous population estimates very few of the imputed records will have an Indigenous status imputed due to the predominate non-Indigenous status of the population in the areas where most imputed records were required to be created.

Table 2.2 illustrates the variation that can occur in the size and distribution of the Indigenous population at the Australian, state and territory level, depending on which population measure is used. For more information about the different methods of calculating the Indigenous population refer to Appendices 2 and 3 in ABS 2002g.

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## 2.2 POPULATION MEASURES — 30 JUNE 2001

	<i>Census place of enumeration, 7 August 2001</i>		<i>Census usual residence, 7 August 2001</i>		<i>Experimental estimated resident population(a) at 30 June 2001</i>	
	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>no.</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>no.</i>
New South Wales	119 865	6 311 168	120 047	6 326 579	134 888	6 575 217
Victoria	25 078	4 612 097	25 059	4 660 991	27 846	4 804 726
Queensland	112 772	3 585 639	112 575	3 522 044	125 910	3 628 946
South Australia	23 425	1 458 912	23 377	1 470 057	25 544	1 511 728
Western Australia	58 496	1 832 008	58 467	1 828 294	65 931	1 901 159
Tasmania	15 773	454 841	15 856	460 672	17 384	471 795
Northern Territory	50 785	202 729	50 845	188 075	56 875	197 768
Australian Capital Territory	3 576	309 184	3 548	309 998	3 909	319 317
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>410 003</b>	<b>18 769 249</b>	<b>410 003</b>	<b>18 769 249</b>	<b>458 520</b>	<b>19 413 240</b>

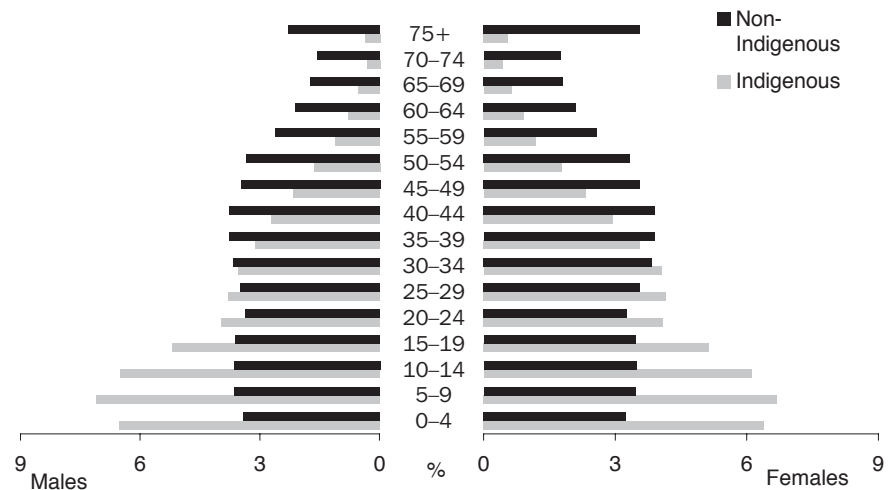
(a) Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Source: ABS 2002g, ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

**Age** The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population. The following age pyramid shows the proportion of the total Australian population in five-year age groups for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (graph 2.3). The graph reflects higher rates of fertility in the Indigenous population and deaths occurring at younger ages. This can be seen by the higher proportions of younger people and the lower proportion of aged people compared to the non-Indigenous population. At 30 June 2001, half the Indigenous population was aged less than 20.5 years, while for the non-Indigenous population, the corresponding figure was 36 years. Because age is closely associated with health status, any comparisons between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations are age standardised or presented as separate results for age groups.

## 2.3 POPULATION PROFILE, BY AGE AND SEX — 2001



Source: Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001, ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Where Indigenous persons live

State and territory

In the 2001 Census, over half of the estimated resident Indigenous population lived in either New South Wales (29%) or Queensland (27%); 14% were in Western Australia and 12% in the Northern Territory. More than one in four people in the Northern Territory (29%) were estimated to be of Indigenous origin. In all other states and territories, Indigenous Australians were estimated to comprise less than 4% of those populations, with the proportion in Victoria being the lowest (table 2.4) (ABS 2002g).

### 2.4 EXPERIMENTAL ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION(a) — 30 JUNE 2001

	Indigenous population	Proportion of the total Australian Indigenous population		Proportion of the total state or territory population	
		no.	%	%	%
New South Wales	134 888	29.4	2.1		
Victoria	27 846	6.1	0.6		
Queensland	125 910	27.5	3.5		
South Australia	25 544	5.6	1.7		
Western Australia	65 931	14.4	3.5		
Tasmania	17 384	3.8	3.7		
Northern Territory	56 875	12.4	28.8		
Australian Capital Territory	3 909	0.9	1.2		
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>458 520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>		

(a) Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

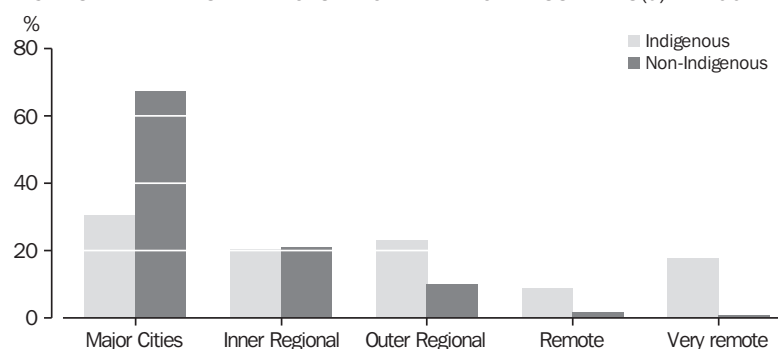
Source: ABS data available on request, Demography, 2003.

## Remoteness Areas

The geographic concept of Remoteness Areas, based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA), was included for the first time in the 2001 edition of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). Remoteness Areas are designed to provide statistics which compare, on the one hand the major cities, and, at the other extreme, very remote areas (see Glossary for further information).

Distance is often a factor in accessing services for Australians in remote or rural areas. Results from the 2001 Census indicate that one in four Indigenous Australians were living in Remote or Very Remote areas, compared to only 2% of non-Indigenous Australians. While the highest proportion of the Indigenous population was living in Major Cities (30%), there was a much higher proportion of the non-Indigenous population in Major Cities (67%) (graph 2.5). The distribution of discrete Indigenous communities by Remoteness Areas is shown in Appendix 2.

2.5 ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY REMOTENESS AREAS(a) — 2001



(a) Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

As a result of these differences in population distribution, the Indigenous proportion of the total population rose with increasing geographic remoteness, from 1% of the total population living in Major Cities to 45% in Very Remote areas.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Regions

The experimental estimated resident Indigenous populations for ATSIC Regions for 1996 and 2001 are shown in table 2.6. The high Indigenous population increases were mainly associated with more urbanised regions. The smallest increases occurred in the Torres Strait area (6%), Warburton (6%), and Aputula (4%).

2.6 EXPERIMENTAL INDIGENOUS ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION(a),  
BY ATSIIC REGION

ATSIIC region	2001	1996	Change between 1996 and 2001
	no.	no.	%
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Bourke	8 867	7 951	12
Coffs Harbour	36 118	27 127	33
Queanbeyan(b)	12 415	9 855	26
Sydney	43 145	37 117	16
Tamworth	14 413	11 595	24
Wagga Wagga	24 055	19 535	23
<b>Victoria</b>			
Ballarat	14 427	11 660	24
Wangaratta	13 419	10 938	23
<b>Queensland</b>			
Brisbane	38 986	30 325	29
Cairns	18 879	16 144	17
Cooktown	7 326	6 184	19
Mount Isa	8 223	7 306	13
Rockhampton	14 529	12 436	17
Roma	12 256	9 661	27
Torres Strait Area	7 078	6 654	6
Townsville	18 633	16 107	16
<b>South Australia</b>			
Adelaide	16 236	13 686	19
Ceduna	2 251	2 014	12
Port Augusta	7 057	6 351	11
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Broome	4 712	3 760	25
Derby	5 349	4 347	23
Geraldton	6 491	5 497	18
Kalgoorlie	4 052	3 462	17
Kununurra	5 378	4 887	10
Narrogin	8 155	6 814	20
Perth	23 214	19 765	18
South Hedland	5 463	4 721	16
Warburton	3 117	2 952	6
<b>Tasmania</b>			
Hobart	17 384	15 322	14
<b>Northern Territory</b>			
Alice Springs	5 625	4 986	13
Aputula	8 758	8 427	4
Darwin	11 375	10 078	13
Jabiru	9 444	8 685	9
Katherine	9 085	7 986	14
Nhulunbuy	8 829	7 848	13
Tennant Creek	3 759	3 866	-3
<b>Australia(c)</b>	<b>458 520</b>	<b>386 049</b>	<b>19</b>

(a) Final rebased experimental Indigenous estimated resident population as at 30 June 2001.

(b) Included Jervis Bay Territory in 2001.

(c) Included Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Island in 2001, and Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Island and Jervis Bay Territory in 1996.

Source: ABS data available on request, 1996 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

2.7 ATSIC REGIONS — 2001



Note: Boundaries based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission regions.

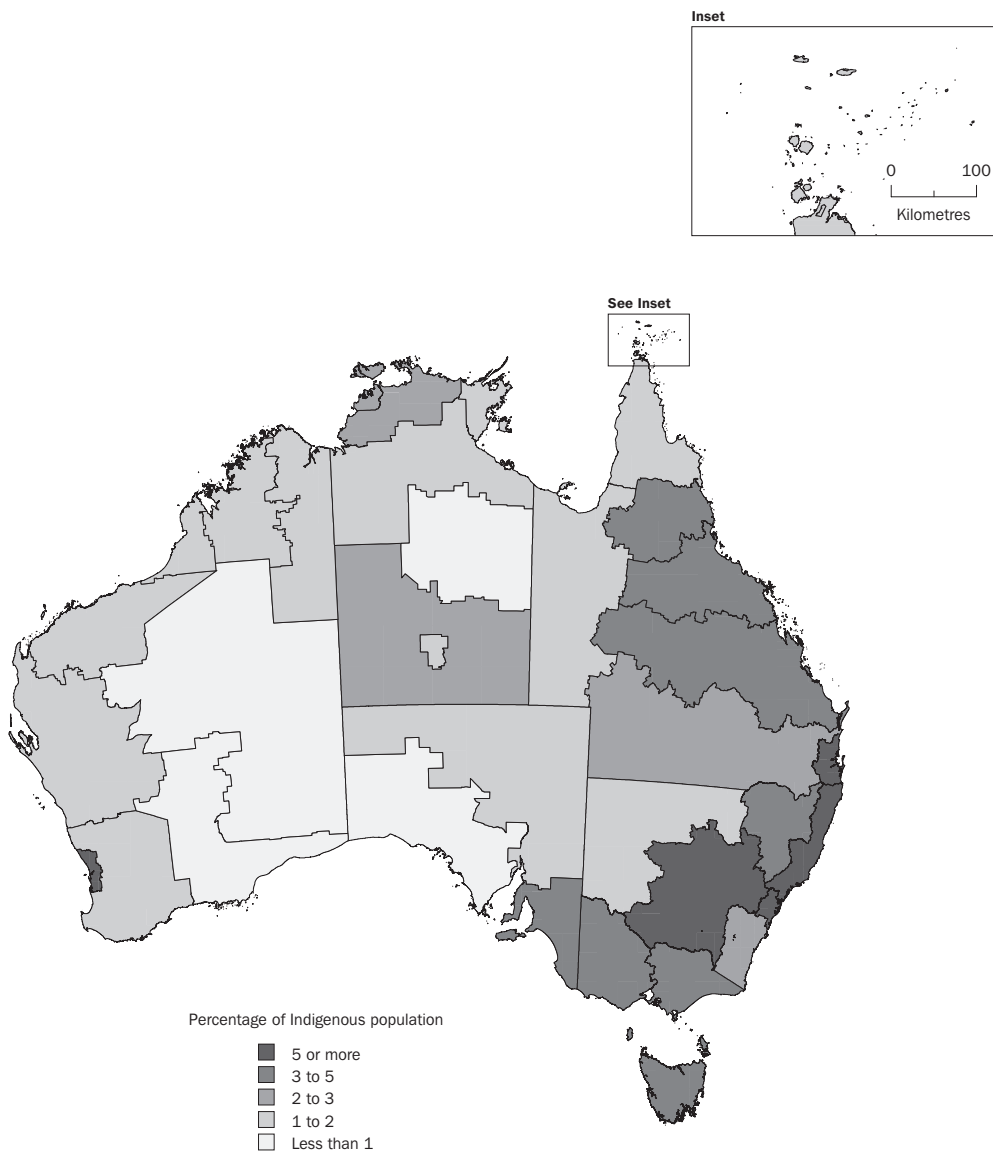
Source: ABS 2002g.

Maps 2.8 and 2.9 show the distribution of the Indigenous population across Australia at the 2001 Census by ATSIC regions (see map 2.7). While the shadings in these maps display area-based patterns in average population characteristics, the size of regions varies widely and may distort the visual impression. Characteristics attributed to a large geographic area may actually derive mainly from a population concentration that covers just a small portion of the total area.

Remoteness Areas *continued*

The majority of the Indigenous population reside in south-eastern regions of Australia (map 2. 8). However, in the northern and eastern regions of the country, Indigenous persons made up a larger proportion of the population and were more likely to be living in urban areas (map 2.9). In five of the 36 ATSIC Regions Indigenous persons account for more than half of the population: the Torres Strait Area (74%); Jabiru (65%); Apatula (64%); Nhulunbuy (61%); and Tennant Creek (51%).

2.8 INDIGENOUS REGIONAL POPULATION AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL INDIGENOUS POPULATION — 2001

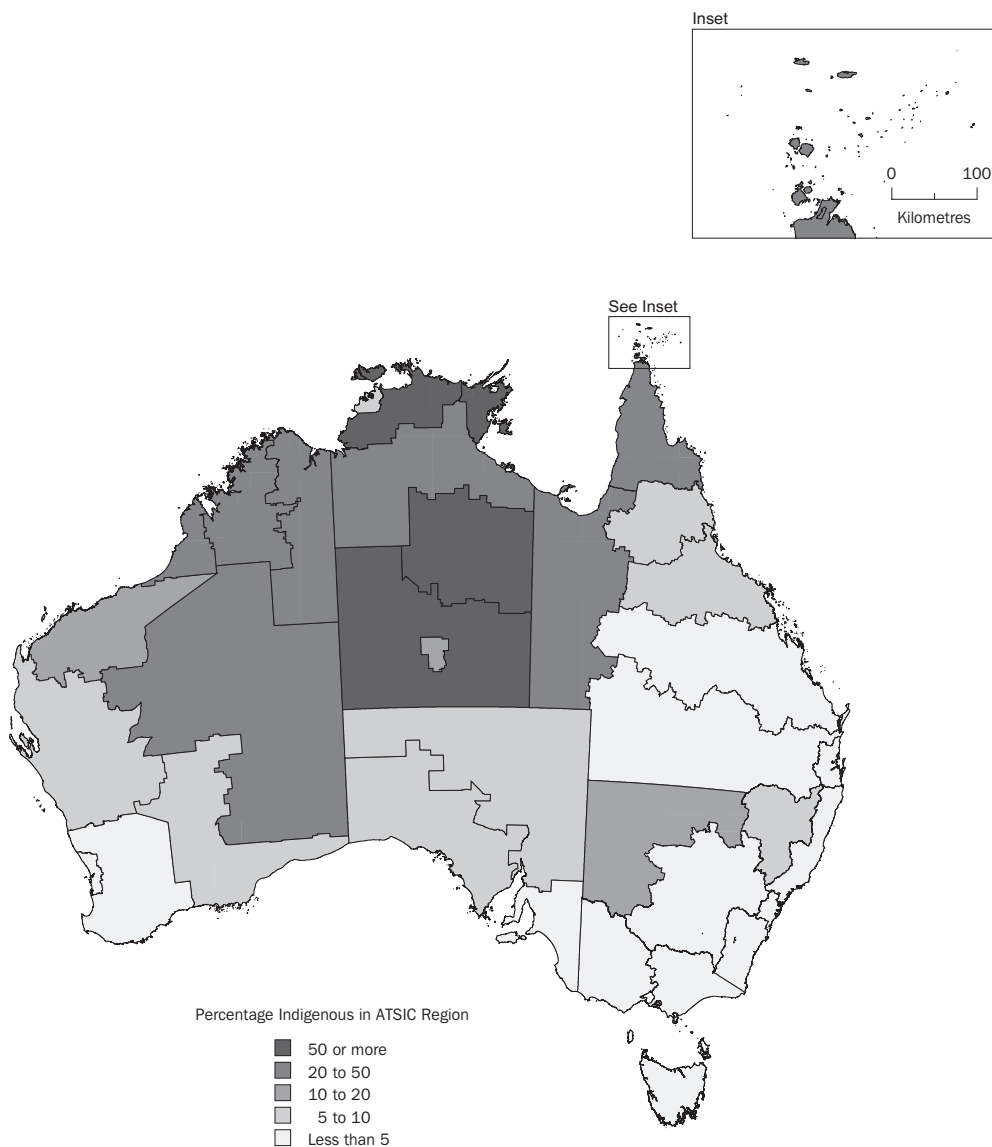


Note: Boundaries are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission regions.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.



## 2.9 INDIGENOUS POPULATION AS A PROPORTION OF THE REGIONAL POPULATION — 2001



Note: Boundaries are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission regions.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

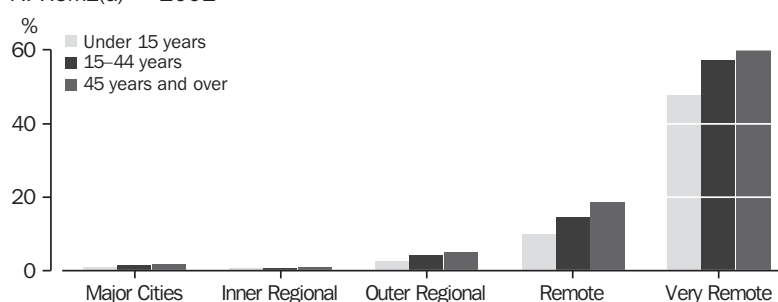
### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

**Language** The vast majority of Indigenous Australians (about 80%) reported that at home they spoke English only, similar to the level reported by non-Indigenous Australians. About one in eight Indigenous persons (12%), reported that they spoke an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island (Australian Indigenous) language at home. Indigenous languages were much more likely to be spoken in geographically remote areas. More than half (55%) of Indigenous Australians living in Very Remote areas reported an Indigenous language compared with about 1% of Indigenous Australians in Major Cities and Inner Regional areas (ABS 2003b).

Language *continued*

In 2001, the pattern of Indigenous language use by age was consistent with that reported in 1996. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (aged 45 and over) were more likely than those in younger age groups, to have reported speaking an Indigenous language. Of Indigenous children under 15 years of age, 10% were identified as Indigenous language speakers compared with 15% of Indigenous Australians aged 45 years or older. Among Indigenous Australians aged 45 years and over, the proportion who spoke an Indigenous language at home increased with geographic remoteness, from about 1% in Major Cities and Inner Regional areas, to 61% in Very Remote areas (graph 2.10). A discussion of proficiency in spoken English as a barrier to health services is in Chapter 4.

2.10 INDIGENOUS PERSONS WHO SPOKE AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AT HOME(a) — 2001



(a) Excludes 4,854 Torres Strait Islander persons classified as speaking 'Oceanic Pidgin and Creoles n.f.d.'. See Explanatory Notes for further details.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Education Level of schooling

Data from the 2001 Census indicate that Indigenous Australians were less likely than non-Indigenous Australians to have completed Year 10 or equivalent. Of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over who were no longer at school, 32% had not completed Year 10 or equivalent, compared to 18% of non-Indigenous persons.

In addition, Indigenous Australians were less likely than non-Indigenous Australians to have completed higher levels of schooling. Of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over who were no longer at school, 18% reported that they had completed school to Year 12, compared to 41% of non-Indigenous persons.

Indigenous males were less likely to have completed Year 12 or equivalent than Indigenous females (16% to 19% respectively). No such gender difference was apparent for non-Indigenous persons (table 2.11).

For Indigenous persons, highest level of schooling completed generally declined with increasing geographic remoteness. As a result, the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons was greatest in Very Remote areas, where Indigenous persons were only one-third as likely as non-Indigenous persons to have completed Year 12 (ABS 2003a).

2.11 HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED(a) — 2001

	<i>Indigenous</i>		<i>Non-Indigenous</i>	
	<i>no.</i>	<i>%(b)</i>	<i>no.</i>	<i>%(b)</i>
MALES				
Still at school	6 101	..	238 532	..
Did not go to school	3 638	3.2	60 630	0.9
Year 8 or equivalent	21 646	19.1	632 426	9.6
Year 9 or equivalent	16 992	15.0	529 273	8.0
Year 10 or equivalent	31 784	28.0	1 687 288	25.5
Year 11 or equivalent	10 170	9.0	695 277	10.5
Year 12 or equivalent	18 705	16.5	2 702 361	40.9
<i>Total(c)</i>	<i>119 529</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>6 845 389</i>	<i>100.0</i>
FEMALES				
Still at school	6 563	..	246 971	..
Did not go to school	3 759	3.1	77 423	1.1
Year 8 or equivalent	20 195	16.4	689 840	10.0
Year 9 or equivalent	17 384	14.1	537 404	7.8
Year 10 or equivalent	35 389	28.8	1 747 747	25.3
Year 11 or equivalent	12 667	10.3	693 555	10.0
Year 12 or equivalent	23 218	18.9	2 827 520	40.9
<i>Total(c)</i>	<i>129 545</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>7 161 598</i>	<i>100.0</i>

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons not applicable, and persons for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(b) Excludes persons still at school.

(c) Includes persons for whom highest level of schooling was not stated.

Source: ABS, data available upon request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

### Non-school qualifications

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years and over in 2001, 18% reported having a non-school qualification. This was an increase from 14% in 1996. Over the same period, there was a corresponding increase in the proportion of non-Indigenous persons who reported having a non-school qualification (from 36% to 40%). Indigenous Australians continued to be about half as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have a non-school qualification.

For Indigenous persons, the likelihood of having a non-school qualification declined with increasing geographic remoteness. In Major Cities Indigenous persons were around half as likely as non-Indigenous persons to have a non-school qualification; in Very Remote areas they were only one-sixth as likely.

In the 2001 Census, a higher proportion of males than females reported having a non-school qualification, with the disparity more marked in the non-Indigenous population. About one in five (19%) of Indigenous males reported a non-school qualification compared with 16% of Indigenous females. In comparison, almost half (46%) of non-Indigenous males and about one-third (34%) of non-Indigenous females reported a non-school qualification (table 2.12).

2.12 HIGHEST NON-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION COMPLETED(a)  
— 2001

	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>
	%	%
MALES		
Has qualification		
Degree or higher	2.3	13.2
Diploma level	1.9	5.7
Certificate level	12.3	24.1
Level not determined	2.5	2.8
<i>Total</i>	18.9	45.7
No non-school qualification	70.2	49.9
Not stated	11.0	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
FEMALES		
Has qualification		
Degree or higher	3.5	14.0
Diploma level	3.1	6.9
Certificate level	6.7	9.1
Level not determined	3.0	4.2
<i>Total</i>	16.3	34.2
No non-school qualification	74.0	60.5
Not stated	9.8	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Persons aged 15 years and over.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Labour force    Employment

At the 2001 Census, 42% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over were in employment (employment to population ratio), compared with a non-Indigenous employment rate of 58%. Adjusting for the differing age structures of the two populations would widen the gap in employment ratios. In 1996, 41% of Indigenous Australians were employed. A higher proportion of Indigenous males (47%) than females (36%) were in employment, with a similar pattern observed for non-Indigenous persons in this group (66% of males and 52% of females). About one in six Indigenous persons classified as employed was participating in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). There were 17,800 Indigenous CDEP participants identified in the 2001 Census, accounting for 20% of Indigenous male employment and 15% of Indigenous female employment (graphs 2.13 and 2.14).

The labour force participation rate was higher for total Australian males than for total Australian females. Indigenous males had a participation rate of 61% compared with 71% for non-Indigenous males, while the participation rate for Indigenous females was 44% compared to 56% for non-Indigenous females (ABS data available upon request, 2001 Census).

## CDEP

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) provides access to the CDEP scheme to (mainly) Indigenous persons across Australia. The main aim of CDEP is to create local employment opportunities in remote Indigenous communities where the labour market might not otherwise offer employment. The CDEP scheme involves a trade off of individual 'dole' entitlements for a community entitlement that is managed through community based work. Most CDEP organisations continue to be located in regional and remote areas of Australia. Of those Indigenous persons counted in the 2001 Census as CDEP participants, the majority (69%) were in Very Remote areas and a further 10% were in Remote areas.

The Census count of CDEP participants was equivalent to about 60% of the number of participants (32,000) recorded for administrative purposes by ATSIC at the same time. The majority of CDEP participants identified in the Census were counted on Special Indigenous Forms. These forms contained explicit references to CDEP and were often used in Remote and Very Remote areas. The standard Census form (used in less remote areas) was not specifically designed to collect information on CDEP participation so it is likely that not all participants were identified.

## Unemployment

Unemployed persons are those who during the week prior to the Census, did not have a job but were available and actively looking for work (ABS 2001d). Indigenous males had an unemployment rate of 22% compared to 8% for non-Indigenous males (graph 2.13), while the unemployment rate for Indigenous females was 18% compared with 7% for non-Indigenous females (graph 2.14). The labour force participation rate was higher for males than for females. Indigenous males had a participation rate of 61% compared with 71% for non-Indigenous males, while the participation rate for Indigenous females was 44% compared to 56% for non-Indigenous females.

2.13 LABOUR FORCE STATUS, MALES(a) — 2001

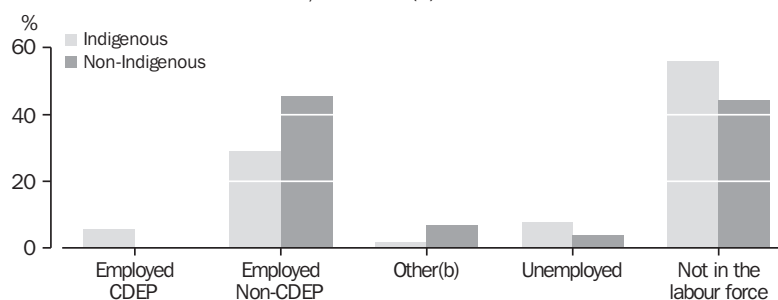


(a) Persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons for whom Indigenous status and/or labour force status was not stated.

(b) Includes employers, own account workers and contributing family workers.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

## 2.14 LABOUR FORCE STATUS, FEMALES(a) — 2001



(a) Persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons for whom Indigenous status and/or labour force status was not stated.

(b) Includes employers, own account workers and contributing family workers.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

## Occupation

Among Indigenous Australians employed in 2001, Indigenous persons were most likely to be categorised as labourers and related workers (24% of employed Indigenous persons), which included occupations such as factory workers, electrical and telecommunication trades assistants, and agricultural labourers. Non-Indigenous Australians were more likely to be categorised as professionals (18%). For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons, the second most common occupational group was intermediate clerical, sales and service workers (18% and 16% respectively) (table 2.15). This category included occupations such as receptionists, carers and aides, and hospitality workers (ABS 2001d).

## 2.15 OCCUPATION(a) — 2001

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	%	%
Managers and administrators	3.8	9.3
Professionals	11.1	18.4
Associate professionals	8.5	11.8
Tradespersons and related workers	10.2	12.3
Advanced clerical and service workers	1.8	3.8
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	18.1	16.5
Intermediate production and transport workers	9.6	8.1
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	8.6	9.6
Labourers and related workers	23.5	8.4
Inadequately described	2.0	0.8
Not stated	2.8	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0

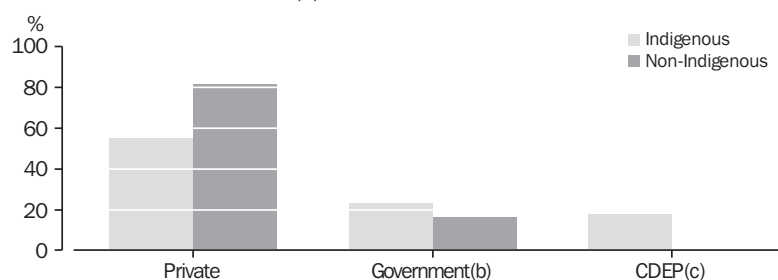
(a) Employed persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

### Occupation *continued*

In 2001, Indigenous Australians were less likely to be employed in the private sector than non-Indigenous Australians (55% to 82% respectively). Commonwealth, state–territory, and local governments provided 23% of Indigenous employment and 16% of non-Indigenous employment. The CDEP scheme accounted for an additional 18% of reported Indigenous employment (graph 2.16).

2.16 EMPLOYMENT SECTOR(a) — 2001



(a) Employed persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons for whom Indigenous status was not stated.

(b) Includes Commonwealth, state/territory and local governments.

(c) Not applicable for non-Indigenous persons.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

**Income** While income is usually received by individuals, it is normally shared among household members. Even when there is no transfer of income among members of a household, nor provision of free or cheap accommodation, members are still likely to benefit from the economies of scale that arise from the sharing of a dwelling. The comparison of income measures is therefore, where possible, related to household income to reflect the sharing of income, and adjusted by equivalence factors to standardise the income estimates with respect to household size and composition. Equivalence factors are based on the assumption that large households generally require a greater level of income than smaller households to maintain the same material standard of living. Equivalence scales also assume that the living costs of adults are normally greater than the costs of children. Therefore the equivalised income estimate for any household, other than a lone person household, will not accord with the amounts that households actually receive. See Glossary for a more detailed explanation of equivalised income. In comparing incomes, as a proxy for direct comparisons of the economic wellbeing of individuals, it would also be desirable to take account of the taxation paid on those incomes. However, the available data sources do not allow the presentation of disposable (after tax) incomes for Indigenous Australians, so that household income comparisons between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in this Chapter are made generally using equivalised gross weekly household incomes.

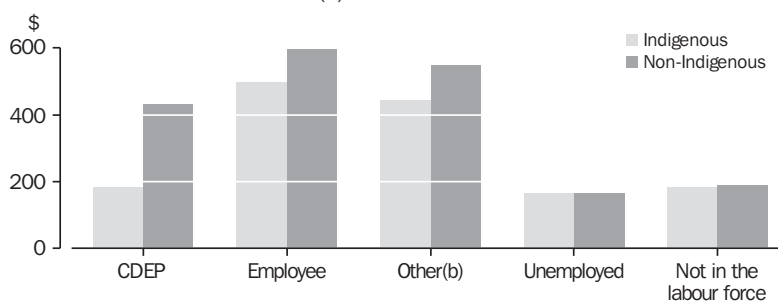
Also, the income data used for comparison in this Chapter are derived from the Census, which may differ from that reported in a survey specifically designed to collect income information. Further, some people do not answer the Census question on income. In the 2001 Census, 10% of the Indigenous population and 5% of the non-Indigenous population did not provide a response to the question on income. The characteristics of people who did not answer the income question may differ from those who did.

In 2001, the mean (average) equivalised gross household income for Indigenous persons was \$364 per week, or 62% of the corresponding income for non-Indigenous persons (\$585 per week). This disparity reflects the lower household incomes received by households with Indigenous person(s), and the tendency for such households to be larger than Other households.

For Indigenous persons, income levels generally declined with increasing geographic remoteness, although the average equivalised income in outer Regional areas was slightly lower than that in Remote areas. In Major Cities, the average equivalised income for Indigenous persons was one and a half times higher than the corresponding income in Very Remote areas.

For non-Indigenous persons income levels were highest in Major Cities and Very Remote areas alike, lower in Remote areas and lowest in Regional areas. As a consequence, in Major Cities and Regional areas, average equivalised incomes for Indigenous persons were equal to about 70% of corresponding incomes for non-Indigenous persons. In Remote areas they were equal to about 60% and in Very Remote areas about 40%.

2.17 MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME(a) BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS — 2001



(a) Persons aged 15 years and over. Excludes persons for whom Indigenous status and/or income was not stated.

(b) Includes employers, own account workers and contributing family workers.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

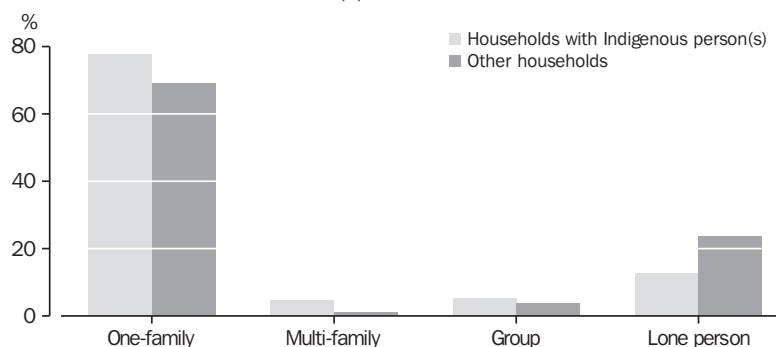


HOUSEHOLD  
CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents information on the living arrangements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in terms of households and families as recorded in the Census. It focuses on households in which at least one Indigenous person, of any age, was resident on Census night. In this publication, these households are called 'households with Indigenous person(s)' and may be further classified as family, group or lone person households. Households with no identified Indigenous person(s) present are called 'Other households' for purposes of comparison.

**Household size** A family is defined by the ABS as two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, who are usually resident in the same household. Family households can contain non-family members. A multiple family (multi-family) household contains up to three families (ABS 2001d). At the 2001 Census, households with Indigenous person(s) were more likely than Other households to be family households (82% compared with 70%) and less likely to be lone person households (13% compared with 24%) (graph 2.18).

2.18 HOUSEHOLD TYPE — 2001(a)



(a) See Glossary for definition of households with Indigenous person(s) and Other households.  
Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Households with Indigenous person(s) were larger on average (3.5 persons) than Other households (2.6 persons). The major factor contributing to this difference is the higher number of dependent children in households with Indigenous person(s). The largest households were those with two or more families (multi-family households). Multi-family households with Indigenous person(s) had an average of 7.7 persons, compared with 5.4 persons in Other households.

## 2.19 CAPE YORK INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH FAMILY INCOME MANAGEMENT

Health, living standards, education, employment, family well being and capacity building issues are all being targeted by the Cape York Family Income Management (FIM) project with great results being achieved. This Indigenous project is funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy and commenced on-ground operations in July 2002.

### Background

The lack of access to and capacity to use financial services and products coupled with a lack of money management skills affects the family budget and contributes to family stress, conflict and poor health. The FIM project involves working with the family to maximise the use of their total income to meet their needs and aspirations, to better discharge their responsibilities to each other and to increase social and economic participation. Indigenous families have signed up to this project entirely voluntarily and participants keep control of their money at all times.

### On the ground operations

This project centres around the communities of Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge in far north Queensland. Skilled workers and local family facilitators in each community help families work through their financial situation and negotiate a family budget plan which takes into account debt repayments, living costs and savings for agreed purposes. The negotiation process requires families to consider much broader issues than just their financial situation, and workers ensure appropriate referrals are made to other services as required. Workers are also:

- conducting a Junior FIM program in schools
- helping set up nutrition and pharmacy accounts in cooperation with local stores for people to use to buy food and purchase medications
- working with community justice groups in local substance abuse reduction strategies.

### How does it work?

Centrelink and ATSIC's CDEP organisations direct deduct amounts from a participant's income support or wages payments to FIM sub-accounts, operated by each FIM Office. A person may have several such accounts for different purposes, including group accounts. Participants' bills are paid through the FIM Office, out of the person's or family group's relevant sub-account.

*...continued*

2.19 CAPE YORK INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH FAMILY INCOME MANAGEMENT *continued*

Partnerships at work

For the success of this project, a number of people have come together to develop a practical working partnership with obvious dedication to producing real outcomes for Indigenous communities. FIM has an active working group overseeing project management and evaluation, comprised of community representatives; the Cape York Partnerships Office; Family and Community Services; Centrelink; Westpac and ATSIC. Westpac provides skilled secondees for one month every quarter to help FIM workers. So far they have helped with developing information products, budgeting tools and the accounts management system, administrative work and community education activities.

The results speak for themselves

There are now nearly 500 active participants, and more than 200 have already achieved their first savings goals. Goods purchased so far include many fridges, washing machines, freezers, TVs, CD players, furniture, clothing and a car. Others are stabilising their debt situations and covering essential bills before starting to save. The new whitegoods and the operation of nutrition and pharmacy accounts are contributing to health improvements. Participants report that being able to cover living costs and buy furniture and leisure goods is also reducing family conflict, increasing time families spend together and increasing motivation to work. The direct deductions system reduces cash on hand vulnerable to 'humbugging' (a practice derived from the strong cultural value of resource sharing), and indications are that less money is being spent on alcohol, drugs and gambling.

FIM is also encouraging local enterprise — due to demand from FIM participants now able to buy their products, the Aurukun CDEP furniture-making team has just put on 10 apprentices and is growing into a thriving business. Also in Aurukun, a group of young people are using FIM to manage money for their business enterprise (running video nights and selling chips and soft drinks) and to save profits for a larger enterprise.

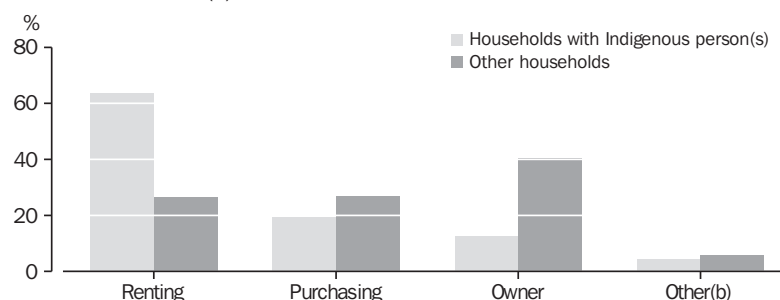
Where to from here?

The project will continue to aim for stronger Indigenous families and communities by working together with Indigenous people, government, private enterprise, CDEPs and local organisations. An interim evaluation report is being prepared, and options for extending the project to other Cape York communities are being developed for further consideration.

*Source: Indigenous Policy Unit, North Australia Office, Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.*

Type of tenure      Census results show that the levels of home ownership and home purchasing for households with Indigenous person(s) (32%) were well below those for Other households (69%). At the 2001 Census, households with Indigenous person(s) were much more likely to report renting their home (63%), than purchasing (19%) or owning their home outright (13%). Households with Indigenous person(s) were more than twice as likely as Other households to be living in rental accommodation (graph 2.21). This pattern of housing tenure is similar to that observed in the 1996 Census.

### 2.20 TENURE TYPE(a)—2001



(a) Households in occupied private dwellings. See Glossary for definition of households with Indigenous person(s) and Other households.

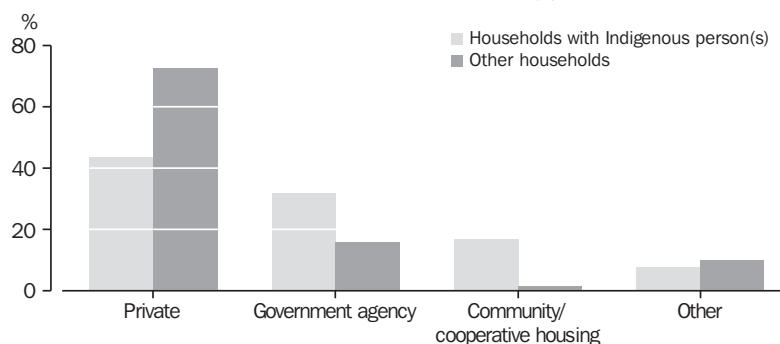
(b) Includes those households where tenure was not known.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

In 2001, 63% of households with Indigenous person(s) were renting, compared with 65% in 1996.

Among renters, fewer households with Indigenous person(s) were renting privately (43%) compared with Other households (73%). Government agencies and community/cooperative housing (Indigenous housing organisations) provided significant shares of the rental accommodation for households with Indigenous person(s) (32% and 17%, respectively). In Very Remote areas, 73% of renter households with Indigenous person(s) were renting from Indigenous Housing Organisations (IHOs) (graph 2.22).

### 2.21 LANDLORD TYPE AMONG RENTER HOUSEHOLDS(a) — 2001



(a) See Glossary for definition of households with Indigenous person(s) and Other households.

Source: ABS data available on request, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

**Weekly rent** Median rents for Households with Indigenous person(s) declined with increasing geographic remoteness, from \$135 per week in Major Cities to \$42 per week in Very Remote areas, reflecting, in part, the provision of low-cost accommodation by IHOs in remote areas. Median rents for Other households followed a similar pattern, but tended to be higher than those for households with Indigenous person(s) (table 2.23).

2.22 MEDIAN WEEKLY RENT(a) — 2001

	<i>Households with Indigenous person(s)</i>	<i>Other households</i>
	\$	\$
Major Cities	135	165
Inner Regional	110	125
Outer Regional	100	105
Remote	80	80
Very Remote	42	49
Total	100	150

(a) See Glossary for definition of households with Indigenous person(s) and Other households.

Source: ABS 2003b.

SUMMARY

The 2001 Census data presented in this Chapter indicate that, compared with non-Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are disadvantaged with regard to a range of socioeconomic indicators. Indigenous Australians experienced lower incomes than the non-Indigenous population, higher rates of unemployment, poorer educational outcomes and lower rates of home ownership, all of which can impact upon a person's health and sense of wellbeing.

